



17th Special Session of the Human Rights Council  
Situation of Human Rights in the Syrian Arab Republic  
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Thank you Madam President,

The Cairo Institute for Human Rights Studies, in cooperation with the Hamdallah Foundation for the Defense of Syrian Human Rights Defenders and the Syrian Center for Transitional Justice and Democracy Empowerment, applaud the holding of this special session.

A rapidly growing number of credible sources, including a recently released UN Fact Finding Mission report, confirm that the widespread and systematic nature of rights violations being carried out by government forces in Syria appear to constitute Crimes Against Humanity, as provided for in article 7 of the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court.

Shamefully, despite these serious charges, a number of governments in this room today have attempted to weaken support or undermine the strength of the draft resolution before this Council. The cosponsors of this resolution must not be swayed.

As we speak, ongoing demonstrations are repressed using lethal force. Thousands have become victims of extrajudicial killings, arbitrary arrests, and enforced disappearances. Targeted attacks by Syrian Security Forces have resulted in 2927 documented deaths, including 160 children and 122 women. Torture is rampant, in many cases resulting in death. Several cities are under complete military siege using heavy artillery such as tanks. Mass graves have been found in the city of Daraa. The wounded are often deliberately prevented from receiving medical treatment.

There are no signs that these violations have ceased or are decreasing. Yet, the people of Syria refuse to end their peaceful calls for freedom and democracy. It is in the defense of these brave citizens that the international community must speak today with a united voice and serious purpose.

We call for the immediate establishment of a Commission of Inquiry, tasked with investigating all allegations of Crimes Against Humanity, and whose conclusions can be rapidly transmitted to the Security Council for

consideration. This Commission should build on the work undertaken by the Fact Finding Mission, and should be enabled to report back to the Council as soon as possible.

Condemnation is no longer enough. The Security Council has failed to uphold its responsibility to protect while thousands of women, children and innocent civilians continue to be slaughtered. The time for accountability is long overdue. The Human Rights Council must do all that is possible within its mandate to respond to the situation. The establishment of a Commission of Inquiry is a first step towards addressing these crimes, with the view to achieving accountability.

Thank you.